

Official State Department Report on the News Conference Held by Secretary Dulles

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, April 2.—Following is the State Department's record of Secretary of State Dulles' news conference today.

SECRETARY DULLES: am available to answer questions.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, has the United States given an guarantee to [Generalissimo] Chiang Kai-shek that it will help defend Quemoy and Matsu in the event of attack?

A.—No. The only commitments of the United States are as authorized in the Act of Congress, which calls for the defense of Formosa [Taiwan] and the Pescadore [Penghu] area, and of other related areas if their defense is connected with the defense of Taiwan and Penghu. That decision will be made by the President, when the circumstances call for it.

Q.—Was there ever a secret letter sent to Chiang Kai-shek which might have raised some question on this point?

A.—Well, I wouldn't want to say there had never been any private communication between the President and the heads of other governments. He has quite an extensive correspondence of that kind, and that is a matter which is within his jurisdiction, and on which I won't comment.

Q.—Well, Mr. Secretary, do you know anything about a personal assurance from President Eisenhower on this point that might have satisfied Chiang Kai-shek that the United States would defend those two islands?

A.—I'm quite confident that there is nothing beyond what I have described. Obviously, that description which I have given implies that under certain conditions we would go to the defense of the offshore islands; that is, if their defense seemed related to the defense of Taiwan and Penghu.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, is it fair to say then, on the basis of what you have told us, that there is no American commitment of any kind implicit or explicit, stated or implied, to defend these islands beyond the actual language of the Congressional resolution?

A.—That is correct.

Biography Is Mentioned

Q.—Mr. Secretary, would you comment on the statement of your most recent biographer to the effect that the withdrawal of the [High] Aswan dam offer to Mr. [Abdel Nasser] Nasser [President of Egypt] was a truly brilliant gambit in the "cold war"?

A.—I don't care to comment on articles written about me. If there are any subjects that, as a result of such writing seem to merit your questioning me, I'm glad to answer your questions on their merits, but not in terms of what may have been written about me.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, let us put it this way: did you make a decision to cancel the offer of aid on the Aswan dam in order to force a showdown with the Soviet Union in the Middle East?

A.—I think that question could be answered in the negative. There were, of course, a number of reasons which dictated our declining to go ahead with the Aswan proposal.

There was, perhaps first of all and most imperative, the fact that the appropriations committee of the Senate had unanimously passed a resolution providing that none of the 1957 funds could be used for the Aswan dam.

There was the fact, that we had come to the feeling in our own mind that it was very dubious whether a project of this magnitude could be carried through with mutual advantage. It is a tremendous project involving an estimated billion and a half dollars, probably it would cost more than that. And the Egyptian component of that, in terms of domestic currency and effort, would involve a gigantic effort and call for an austerity program over a period of twelve to fifteen years. Undoubtedly, that would be a burden and cause of complaint on the part of the Egyptian people, and probably the responsibility for that would be placed upon the foreign lenders, and they would end up by being disliked instead of liked.

Then there was the further fact that the Egyptians had during the immediately preceding period been developing ever-closer relations with the Soviet bloc countries. Only a few days before I was asked for a definitive answer by the Egyptians. They had recognized Communist China—being the first Arab nation to do so. And, indeed, it became, I think, the first nation in the world to do so since the attack on Korea.

Issue Forced by Egypt

And in that way the Egyptians, in a sense, forced upon us an issue to which I think there was only one proper response: That issue was, do nations which play both sides get better treatment than nations which are stalwart and stick with us? That question

which the Egyptians presented their final request to us; and stalwart allies were watching very carefully to see that the answer would be: stalwart allies which included some in the same area.

Under all the circumstances I think there was no doubt whatsoever as to the propriety of the answer given. It was given in a courteous manner, as you will find if you will go back and reread the statement which was given out at the time, which reaffirmed our friendship for the Egyptian people, and indicated our willingness in other ways to try to assist the Egyptian economy.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, to bring this discussion up to date, what can you tell us about the status of the negotiations over the [Suez] canal; whether there has been any response to the Egyptian memorandum and what you consider to be the outlook for a settlement based on the six principles of the United Nations?

A.—We presented our views on Sunday, I think it was, indicating what we thought was necessary in order to bring the so-called draft memorandum into line with the Security Council action. The Security Council had, last October, said that any settlement ought to meet certain specified requirements, and then it listed six requirements of any settlement. It seemed to us that the so-called draft memorandum fell short of meeting those requirements. We pointed out to the Government of Egypt the respects in which it did, in our opinion, so fall short; and ways by which that short-fall might perhaps be remedied. We have had no response, as yet, from the Egyptian Government.

Q.—Can you tell us any of those points, especially how if one of the short-falls, in fact the question of the binding nature of this document—how you would propose to make it an international obligation on all countries involved?

A.—Well, one of the weaknesses is the fact that even though perhaps the Egyptians intended this to constitute an international obligation, our lawyers are not at all sure that they did in fact produce that result, but that it may be merely a unilateral statement subject to unilateral change at any time without any right on anybody's part to prevent that.

Now we believe that it can,

changes, be converted into a multilateral obligation by perhaps some such measure as filing it with the United Nations, and providing that any nation which files an acceptance of it shall thereby gain rights under it. There are various ways in which I think that could be done; I am not at sure that the Egyptians did not by their original draft intend some such result. But, if so, I do not think they made their intent adequate from the legal standpoint.

Israeli Question Raised

Q.—Mr. Secretary, has Israel informed this Government that it will try to send a ship through the Suez Canal and if it does make this attempt can you tell us what the American Government's attitude will be?

A. I am not aware of our being officially advised in the sense that you mentioned, although it is possible that in the course of conversations with some of my associates such an intent may have been indicated. I just don't know about that. I would point out that at the time of the withdrawal of Israeli forces and at the time of discussions which preceded that, the emphasis of the Government of Israel in their communications with the United States was upon the situation of the Gulf of Aqaba and the situation in the Gaza Strip. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's letter to President Eisenhower did not mention the Suez Canal. Nevertheless, they and we do believe that every country has a right to send its ships and cargoes through the Suez Canal. Our belief was reflected by the security council decision of '51 where the United States voted in that sense as a member of the Security Council and we continue to adhere to that view.

Q.—Mr. Secretary, do you have any indication at all from sources in Egypt that Egypt may soon renounce its belligerency against Israel and permit her ships to go through the canal?

A.—No, we have no evidence of that sort. I believe that that matter is perhaps still under consideration as a result of the mission of Mr. [Dag] Hammarskjöld [United Nations Secretary General] to the area. His public report did not cover, I think, all of the matters which he discussed. It does include a report, of course, on the Gaza Strip and I want to say that the United States shares the sentiments of

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT